19: Kharuzin -- 41 [2] E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 582, 597, 608, 614

The exclusiveness of the clan structure finds expression among the Yakuts of the Yakutsk district in the fact that entrance into the clan for an outsider is almost impossible. Cases of adoption of strangers into the family are in fact encountered among the Yakuts, but only girls are accepted from a strange clan. The adoption of children of the male sex is practiced between close relations or in the most extreme case within the confines of the clan. The adopted child takes the name of the adoptive father, is considered a close relation of the members of the family of the latter, in consequence of which marriage between them and the adopted child is forbidden.

Artificial kinship, in addition to cases of adoption, is also established through foster kinship [BK; in Russian, molochnim rodstvom, literally, "by milk kinship," presumably referring to cases in which adoption is based on suckling of child by woman of the adoptive family]; it is considered as significant as blood kinship. As concerns the swearing of brothership, the almost universal mode of establishing artifical kinship, M. Pripuzov confirms the conclusion, to which M. Sieroszewski apparently also arrives, that at the present time it has fallen into desuetude among the Yakuts. Its existence at a former time, however, is to a certain degree proved by the traditions of the Yakuts.

19: Kharuzin -- 49-50 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-1-2
116, 594, 597, 847

The authority of the father over the persons of his young children is a natural consequence of the patriarchal structure of the Yakut family. The father has the right to abandon a newly born child or to give it to another person. Formerly [50] writes Mr. Pripuzov, the parents, if poor, used to suspend newly born children in their swaddling clothes from trees. Even at the present time, one encounters cases of the sale of children by parents for money: parents give up for money children of the female sex to the person who wishes to adopt a little girl. The price of the latter fluctuates, according to the age, from 20 to 25 rubles. At the present time, such a sale of a daughter is certified with a written document. (1)

1. Mr. Pripuzov quotes an interesting copy of such a document:"February 15, 1891. I, the undersigned, native of the Western-kangalk ulus of the Odunitsk nasleg, Innokenti Vasilev Makhatyrev, give this letter to the native of the same ulus of the Zhersky nasleg, Yegor Bobposov, thereby giving you for permanent adoption my own daughter Anastasya, twelve years old; this with the concurrence of my legal wife, Darya Vasilyeva. You obligate yourself to give her (the daughter) your own name, to rule her as your own daughter, to give her in marriage and, in case of death to bury her according to Christian rites. I received for her, according to our

agreement 20 rubles and I sign my name to indicate that I have no other demands to make, Innokenty Vasilev. Because of Innokenti Vasilev's illiteracy and because of a personal request, this document is signed by Ivan Mikhalev. I, bailiff Grigory Dichkovsky, attest the authenticity of this document." This document clearly demonstrates the rights of parents over daughter and their solicitude as regards her life in her new family. Laying it to the charge of the adopters to marry her off or to cover the expenses of burial in case of death is fully in accord with the ancient law of the Yakuts to dispose of their daughters as they please.

19: Kharuzin --50-51 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 593, 597, 614, 672, 858

The position of sons in the parental home is considerably more independent than that of the daughters. Nevertheless, in personal relations the patriarchal parental authority finds a many-sided application. In addition to the right of giving sons out for adoption, a right which is limited with respect to the sons by the condition that the adoption take place within the confines of the clan, the parents can put their sons out to hire or to apprenticeship. Parents further have the right to use the earnings of their children; their labor goes to the profit of the family; they are obliged to support their parents, and in the event of non-fulfillment of this obligation, the parents can make complaint before the elders of the clan, who, in accordance with the earnings of the son, or his competence order him to support his father. But all these rules have significance only as long as [51] the son has not left the household or married. In general, if the parents feed, clothe their children, "seek their good," and the children feed and support their parents in their old age, bury them decently after death, hold a wake on the 40th day [RCH: on the 40th day the soul of the deceased departs from the earth] and finally place a stone monument over the grave, they are considered to have mutually fulfilled their obligations.

Not all the property, however, is subject to division: a part of it remains in the general possession of the co-heirs (fishing-seines, fenced-off pastures etc.). In additon, before proceeding to the division, a special part of the general property is put aside to cover debts or tax delinquencies. It is natural that an adopted son, (1) taken into a house

1. The parents of the adopted child, having given it away to a strange family, sometimes want it back; in that case they are obliged to pay to the adoptive father all the costs of raising the child. Under the influence of the Russians, the Yakuts have begun to display a scornful attitude toward illegitmates. Formerly, when freedom of relations prevailed, illegitimate children were not differentiated from legitimate. At present there is even a special proverb among the Yakuts concerning the illegitimate children: "born was he by night, christened by the pool's side, the dew was his bedding, the mist was his covering." Children born out of wedlock to a sister who lives with her brothers, upon the death of the father are considered, in the words of Mr. Priklonski Tri Goda v ĺAkutskoi oblasti (Three Years in the Yakutsk Region, p. 80) "to have full rights and inherit in shares the property belonging to their mother."

where there are no sons, should be the heir to the movable and immovable property of

the adoptive father, since adoption is ordinarily resorted to with the object of having an heir. Mr. Pripuzov does not enlighten us as to the position of adopted sons in the presence of sons who are heirs, not as to that of illegitimate children, who are sometimes adopted.

the Yakut system of kinship is close to the systems used by a number of Turkic peoples.

The position of women both in the family and in public life was inferior. The husband, the head of the family, enjoyed despotic power, and the wife could not even complain of harsh treatment, which was a fairly common occurrence, if not at the hands of the husband, then at the hands of his relatives. A woman from another tribe, defenseless and lacking in all rights, was burdened with hard work when she became part of a new family.

The position of older people who were decrepit and no longer able to work was also difficult. Little care was shown for them, they were given little to eat and poorly clothed, sometimes even reduced to complete destitution.

The position of children, despite the fact that the Yakuts loved their children, as pointed out by many observers, was also rather unfortunate. The birth rate was very high among the Yakuts and most families produced from 5 to 10 children, sometimes as many as 20 or even more. However, the bad living conditions, poor food and inattention resulted in very high child mortality. Apart from their own children, many families, particularly those in which there were few children, often adopted children, whom they often simply bought from the poorer people.

Newborn babies were washed by the fire in the hearth and rubbed with cream. This operation was repeated fairly frequently later on. The mother breast-fed her child for some time, as long as 4 or 5 years, although in addition the child received a horn of cow's milk. The Yakut cradle was a long box made of thin, bent pieces of wood, in which the wrapped baby was placed, strapped in and left for some time, without being removed. The cradle had a groove to drain away the urine. Older children usually crawled about the earthen floor together with the animals, either half-naked or completely naked, and were left to themselves; sometimes they were attached to the table on a long strap to prevent them from falling into the fire. The children of the poorer people were trained to work from an early age, and had to carry out work according to their strength—such as collecting brush in the forest, looking after smaller livestock, and so on; the girls were trained in domestic duties. The children of the toyons received more attention, were mollycoddled and generally spoiled.

The children had few toys. These were usually wooden figures of animals, tiny bows and arrows, little houses and model utensils, made by the parents or sometimes by the children themselves; and the girls had dolls with model clothes, blankets, pillows and so on. The games of the Yakut children were simple and rather monotonous. The absence of noisy group games is characteristic; generally speaking, when the children of the poorer Yakuts grew up, they were quiet and sluggish.

Religion

Even in the second half of the 18th century, many of the Yakuts had been baptized, and in the 19th century all Yakuts were registered as Orthodox. Although the transition to Orthodoxy was motivated by and large by material considerations (various privileges and grants for those baptized), the new religion gradually became part of their everyday life. In the corner of their dwellings there hung icons; the people wore crucifixes (the large silver crucifix-type embellishments worn by the women are interesting), went to church and many of them, particularly